

Message Text

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70

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-02 SY-04 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11

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USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, MILI, AR

SUBJECT: GOVT PRESSES SEARCH FOR ERP IN TUCUMAN

REF: BA 6058, 6023

1. LARGE-SCALE SEARCH OPERATIONS DIRECTED BY FIFTH BRIGADE COMMANDER, GENERAL LUCIANO MENDEZ, ARE BEING CARRIED OUT IN TUCUMAN PROVINCE. WHILE THE OPERATIONS CENTERED IN FAMILIA AREA HAVE NOT YET PRODUCED ANY RESULTS, GENERAL MENENDEZ HAS TOLD NEWSMEN THAT HE ESTIMATES 150-200 GUERRILLAS ARE IN THE AREA AND THAT HE EXPECTS TO WIPE THEM OUT. MENENDEZ' FORCE IS PUBLICLY REPORTED TO CONSIST OF 1500 ARMY TROOPS PLUS POLICE. DAO SOURCES ESTIMATE THAT FORCE ALREADY EXCEEDS 1,500 AND MAY BE FURTHER AUGMENTED. IN ANY EVENT, FACT ARMY OPENLY LEADING A LARGE-SCALE ANTIGUERRILLA OPERATION WOULD APPEAR TO INDICATE GOA HAS MADE DECISION, DESPITE PRO FORMA COMMENTS TO CONTRARY, TO USE ARMY IN ANTI-GUERRILLA ROLE-- AT LEAST IN RURAL AREAS.

2. POLICE AND ARMY TROOPS ARE REPORTED TO HAVE MADE SEVERAL
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LARGE-SCALE ARRESTS OF SUSPECTED TERRORISTS AND TERRORIST

SYMPATHIZERS IN CORDOBA AND TUCUMAN PROVINCES IN AREAS OUTSIDE
ZONE OF MILITARY OPERATION. THE "QUALITY" OF THEIR ARRESTS IS
NOT YET CLEAR.

3. ON THE POLITICAL FRONT, ALMOST ALL MAJOR GROUPINGS EXCEPT
THE MONTONEROS HAVE CONDEMNED THE ERP ATTACKS. THE MONTONEROS,
IN A THINLY VEILED THREAT TO GOA, SAID THAT "AT THIS MOMENT"
THE STRUGGLE SHOULD BE CARRIED ON IN "THE POLITICAL AREA". IF
CONDITIONS MAKE POLITICAL STRUGGLE FUTILE, THE MONTONEROS MIGHT
GE FORCED TO RETURN TO ARMED STRUGGLE, THE STATEMENT ADDS.
HILL

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